NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, March 20, 2006

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, March 20, 2006", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 20, 2006, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-monday-march-20-2006/

NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, March 20, 2006

NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, March 20, 2006

I. NAPSNet

- 1. DPRK on Nuclear Mediation
2. US, Japan, Australia on Six Party Talks
3. US on DPRK Illicit Activities, Six Party Talks
4. DPR Koreans Defect to ROK
5. Inter-Korean Reunions
6. Inter-Korean Relations
7. Inter-Korean Scientific Cooperation
8. Inter-Korean Trade
9. ROK on Trans-Asia Railway
10. DPRK-PRC Cooperation
11. Japan on DPRK Sanctions
12. US on DPRK Aid
13. US Staffer Visits Kaesong
14. International Forum on DPRK Human Rights
15. DPRK on US Rhetoric
16. DPRK on US Foreign Policy
17. DPRK on Taxation Status
18. ROK Survey on Security
19. US-ROK Security Alliance
20. US-Japan Relations
21. USFJ Base Realignment
22. US-Japan Military Cooperation

23. Japan SDF Deployment to Iraq
24. Japan DFAA Scandal
25. Japan-ROK Relations
26. Japan on UNSC Reform
27. US, Japan, Australia on PRC
28. Cross Strait Relations
29. US on Cross Strait Relations
30. US-PRC Energy Cooperation

II. CanKor

- 31. Report #241

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Nuclear Mediation

Reuters ("N.KOREA WANTS NORWAY TO BROKER NUCLEAR DEAL ", 2006-03-17) reported that the DPRK wants Norway to mediate in its nuclear standoff with the international community, a newspaper reported on Friday, but Oslo said it favoured a resumption of stalled multi-lateral talks. 'Norway has a good reputation as a peace mediator and very good experience in international conflict resolution,' the DPRK's ambassador to the Nordic region, Jon In Chan, told Verdens Gang, Norway's top selling daily. 'We hope Norway can contribute as conflict solver in the ongoing nuclear dispute between the U.S. and North Korea.' Norway played down the offer, however. 'We have no intention of taking unilateral action towards North Korea,' Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen told Reuters.

(return to top)

2. US, Japan, Australia on Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("IRAN, NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR PROGRAMS CAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN ", 2006-03-18) reported that the US, Japan and Australia said Saturday they share “grave concerns” about Iran's nuclear program, and that the UN Security Council must act to deter Tehran from activities that could produce an atomic bomb. In a joint statement after the first security talks among the three nations, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her counterparts also said the DPRK should return immediately and without conditions to international nuclear talks.

(return to top)

3. US on DPRK Illicit Activities, Six Party Talks

Yonhap News ("U.S. MAY LINK N.K. FINANCIAL PROBLEM TO NUCLEAR TALKS:VERSHBOW", 2006-03-17) reported that the US is ready to have more discussions with the DPRK on the dispute over the latter's alleged illegal activities in the context of the multilateral talks on Pyongyang's

nuclear arms program, Washington's chief envoy in Seoul said on Friday. His remarks were seen as signaling a change from the previous US stance that it would never connect the issue with the DPRK nuclear crisis.

(return to top)

4. DPR Koreans Defect to ROK

Associated Press ("FIVE NORTH KOREANS DEFECT TO SOUTH", 2006-03-19) reported that five DPR Koreans fled their homeland by boat and have applied for asylum in the ROK, the Defense Ministry said Sunday. The DPR Koreans, including a couple in their 30s and their two children ages 2 and 8, crossed the Koreas' eastern sea border on a small barge that was spotted in the ROK waters Saturday night, said a ministry spokesman who identified himself only as Lieutenant Colonel Kim. Kim said the defectors, who also included a 26-year-old man, were still being questioned.

(return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Reunions

Chosun Ilbo ("ROUND 13 OF TEARFUL FAMILY REUNIONS GETS UNDERWAY ", 2006-03-20) reported that the 13th round of reunions between families split by the 38th parallel began at the DPRK's Mt. Kumgang resort on Monday. Some 99 RO Koreans met 269 of their family members and relatives from the DPRK in the first group meeting at the Kumgangsan Hotel, reuniting with the spouses, children, and brothers and sisters that they have yearned for over the last 50 years.

(return to top)

6. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH REFUSES TALKS ON EAST SEA JOINT FISHING AREA ", 2006-03-20) reported that the DPRK has expressed its disapproval of the ROK's suggestion that the two Koreas hold a second round of working-level talks on a joint fishing area in the East Sea. A Unification Ministry official said Monday that the ROK had proposed to hold a working-level meeting in Kaesong for two days from March 22 to March 23 but the DPRK responded that it would be difficult to consent to discussions on the East Sea fishing zone while there still has been no progress made on a similar plan for the West Sea.

(return to top) JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH BARS TRAVEL BY ROH ALLIES ", 2006-03-20) reported that the DPRK has rejected plans by Lee Jong-seok, the unification minister, and Chung Dong-young, the Uri Party chairman, to visit the Kaesong Industrial Complex. The Ministry of Unification said it had asked Pyongyang, which gave no reason for the rejection but said it might reconsider next month, to allow them to travel then. (return to top)

7. Inter-Korean Scientific Cooperation

Korea.net ("KOREA TO SPEND 650 MILLION WON ON JOINT KOREAN RESEARCH PROGRAMS ", 2006-03-19) reported that the ROK government said on Sunday that it plans to spend 650 million won on inter-Korean cooperation projects in the science and technology sector this year. The Ministry of Science and Technology will start receiving applications starting March 27 from universities, research centers and other institutions with project proposals that may be entitled to the funding.

(return to top)

8. Inter-Korean Trade

Yonhap News ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE JUMPS OVER 30 PCT IN FIRST TWO MONTHS", 2006-0--20) reported that trade between the ROK and DPRK jumped more than 30 percent during the first two months of this year, boosted by an increase in inter-Korean cooperation through a DPRK industrial park, a report showed Monday. According to the report by the Korea International Trade Agency (KITA), the trade volume between the two Koreas came to US$129.6 million in the January-February period, up 34.4 percent from a year earlier.

(return to top)

9. ROK on Trans-Asia Railway

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL WANTS MORE FACTS BEFORE TRANS-ASIA RAILWAY ", 2006-03-19) reported that after a two-day forum in Vladivostok, Korea Railroad Corporation chief Lee Chul said Pyongyang has agreed to a Russian proposal to create a consortium to link the Trans-Siberian and Trans-Korean railways. But Lee said Seoul needs more data on the condition of the DPRK's outdated railroads and bridges before committing to the project.

(return to top)

10. DPRK-PRC Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("TOP N.KOREAN OFFICIAL IN CHINA TALKS ", 2006-03-20) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's brother-in-law, the first deputy director of the powerful Workers' Party, is in the PRC. Diplomatic sources in Beijing say Jang Song-taek leads a 30-member delegation to the PRC. Jang arrived in Beijing on Saturday. He is scheduled to visit southern PRC's economic zones Guangzhou and Shenzhen -- sites that Kim Jong-il himself visited during his trip to the PRC in January. Jang is also expected to meet the PRC's top economic officials to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

(return to top)

11. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Japan Times ("LDP OKS SANCTIONS BILL TARGETING NORTH KOREA RIGHTS ABUSES", 2006-03-18) reported that the ruling Japanese Liberal Democratic Party approved a bill Friday that would require the government to impose sanctions on the DPRK if it failed to make progress in addressing its human rights abuses, including the abductions of Japanese. The bill was endorsed unanimously at a joint meeting of related LDP panels, including the foreign affairs division, held at the party headquarters, participants said. The LDP plans to submit the proposed legislation to the Diet as a lawmaker-initiated bill, possibly by the end of this month, after going through several formalities within the party and consulting March 28 with New Komeito, its coalition partner.

(return to top)

12. US on DPRK Aid

Yonhap News ("U.S. FORESEES CONDITIONAL ENERGY AID TO N.K. FROM NEXT YEAR", 2006-

03-20) reported that the US envisions energy and economic aid to the DPRK beginning next year after the state gives up its nuclear programs, according to government performance goals for fiscal year 2007. The US also hopes to press the DPRK on chemical and biological weapons issues while starting negotiations on its missile programs next year.

(return to top)

13. US Staffer Visits Kaesong

Yonhap News ("U.S. CONGRESS STAFFER VISITS N. KOREAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX:SOURCES", 2006-03-20) reported that a staffer for a US Congress committee visited an industrial complex in the DPRK on Monday to witness inter-Korean business cooperation first-hand, diplomatic sources said. "We've heard that Douglas Anderson, a professional staff member for the Committee on International Relations at the House of Representatives and an official from the U.S. embassy here visited North Korea's Kaesong industrial park earlier in the day," an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said on condition of anonymity. It marked the first time for a US official to visit the inter-Korean industrial zone.

(return to top)

14. International Forum on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("SEOUL TO OBSERVE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON N. KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS", 2006-03-20) reported that the ROK will join the upcoming international conference on the DPRK's human rights abuse as an observer again, officials here said on Monday. Freedom House, a US non-profit group, plans to hold a two-day forum from next Wednesday in Brussels, Belgium.

(return to top)

15. DPRK on US Rhetoric

Associated Press ("N. KOREA RIPS BUSH FOR 'EVIL' REPETITION", 2006-03-20) reported that the DPRK berated President Bush on Monday for on March 10 repeating his earlier description of the state as part of an "axis of evil." A DPRK party newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, responded on Monday by calling the US the "ringleader of evil," saying its war on terror had resulted in massacres of people. The newspaper, in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, called Bush's comment "the greatest, intolerable insult to us and a vicious political provocation." "Bush repeating the axis of evil remarks is nothing but an open proclamation that the U.S. imperialists consider us a target of military attack, not a dialogue partner," it said.

(return to top)

16. DPRK on US Foreign Policy

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA DUBS US "WAR MANIAC" ON INVASION ANNIVERSARY ", 2006-03-20) reported that the DPRK has marked the third anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq by branding the US a "war maniac" and killer of countless civilians. "The US imperialists provoked wars in ... Afghanistan and Iraq in the 1990s and the new century, mercilessly destroying peaceful towns and villages and civilian establishments and cruelly killing countless innocent people," said Rodong Sinmun, a DPRK party newspaper.

(return to top)

17. DPRK on Taxation Status

Reuters ("LIFE IS HAPPY IN TAX-FREE NORTH KOREA", 2006-03-20) reported that Pyongyang says life is wonderful -- and blissfully free of tax. The DPRK has one of the lowest per capita income figures in the world. On Monday, DPRK official media sang the praises of living in the country. “The people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea enjoy a happy life, not knowing what the tax is like,” the official KCNA news agency reported.

(return to top)

18. ROK Survey on Security

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREANS SEE CHINA AS THREAT LATER, NOT NORTH - POLL", 2006-03-20) reported that RO Koreans view the PRC rather than the DPRK as the biggest threat to their security 10 years from now, according to a survey. In the survey by the state-funded Korea Institute for Defence Analyses (KIDA), 37.7 percent of respondents listed leading trading partner the PRC as the biggest threat to the ROK 10 years from now because of its growing strength in the region. Japan was second on 23.6 percent, while the DPRK was third on 20.7 percent and the US fourth with 14.8 percent.

(return to top)

19. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA-U.S. ALLIANCE 'MUST CHANGE TO ENDURE'", 2006-03-20) reported that the ROK-US alliance must change if it is to endure, the former head of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Moon Jung-in said Thursday. Moon said the alliance “should not be a tool to alienate North Korea, China and Russia but a step on the way toward a multinational regional security pact.”

(return to top)

20. US-Japan Relations

The Japan Times ("KOIZUMI PLANS TO VISIT BUSH IN U.S. IN JUNE", 2006-03-20) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will make an official visit to Washington in the latter half of June for talks with US President George W. Bush. The trip is expected to be Koizumi's last to the US as prime minister, as he has expressed plans to step down in September.

(return to top) The Japan Times ("ASO PLANNING U.S. TRIP IN LATE APRIL", 2006-03-16) reported that Foreign Minister Taro Aso plans to visit the US in late April for talks with US officials ahead of a planned visit by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in June, Foreign Ministry sources said. (return to top)

21. USFJ Base Realignment

The Japan Times ("DROP BASE PLAN: IWAKUNI MAYOR", 2006-03-17) reported that Iwakuni Mayor Katsusuke Ihara urged Tokyo again to withdraw the planned relocation of US carrier-borne aircraft to his city after a majority of residents voted "no" on the move in a plebiscite on March 12. After a

meeting at the Foreign Ministry with Noriyuki Shikata, director of the Status of US Forces Agreement Division, Ihara also met with senior officials at the Defense Agency and the Defense Facilities Administration Agency in the afternoon.

(return to top) The Japan Times ("FUTENMA RELOCATION PLAN MAY CHANGE, COALITION EXECS HINT", 2006-03-20) reported that executives of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner New Komeito indicated that a minor change could be made to the Japanese-US plan to relocate the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station within Okinawa Prefecture. "We will not change our basic policy, but some sort of change could be made in the course of sincere negotiations with local authorities," LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Hidenao Nakagawa said. (return to top)

22. US-Japan Military Cooperation

Kyodo ("U.S. OFFERS SDF FIRST 'FULL-TIME' OFFSHORE SITE", 2006-03-16) reported that the US has proposed providing facilities on Guam for the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to keep troops and an aircraft squadron there on a "full-time" basis for training, a US Defense Department official said. But uncertainties remain over whether Japan will decide to have such a permanent SDF overseas deployment, which may violate the war-renouncing Constitution.

(return to top) Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN URGED TO UP DEFENSE SPENDING", 2006-03-17) reported that Japan should spend more on defense to fit its growing role as an equal partner in regional security with the US, the US ambassador to Japan said. Speaking at a lecture sponsored by the Asian Affairs Research Council, Thomas Schieffer said he expected Japan to reduce the disparity in defense spending between the two countries, to assure that Tokyo can take on an equal role. (return to top)

23. Japan SDF Deployment to Iraq

The Japan Times ("BRITISH TROOP ADJUSTMENT NO FACTOR FOR SDF: ASO", 2006-03-15) reported that Japan's decision on when to pull its troops from southern Iraq will not be affected by Britain's announcement on March 13 that it will scale down its military presence in the country, Foreign Minister Taro Aso said. Instead, political developments in Iraq will be a key factor in deciding when to withdraw the Ground Self-Defense Force contingent, Aso said at a news conference.

(return to top)

24. Japan DFAA Scandal

The Japan Times ("TRIO'S BID-RIGGING CHARGES GROW", 2006-03-15) reported that Tokyo prosecutors again indicted three men Tuesday over new allegations of bid-rigging for additional public works projects in their past posts at the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA). The three men were prosecuted for construction projects at the Defense Agency's Ichigaya complex in Tokyo.

(return to top)

25. Japan-ROK Relations

Kyodo ("FUKUDA URGES MORE DIALOGUE TO MEND RELATIONS WITH SEOUL", 2006-03-18)

reported that former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda called Friday for dialogue between Japan and ROK to improve soured relations mainly over history-related issues. "We must overcome the bad image proliferating among the people of both countries and deepen mutual understanding," Fukuda said at a joint meeting of the two countries' bilateral cooperation committees in Seoul.

(return to top)

26. Japan on UNSC Reform

The Japan Times ("UNSC REFORM DRIVE STALLING", 2006-03-20) reported that Japan is leaning toward giving up on its plan to submit a new resolution on expanding the United Nations Security Council because it fears it won't be able to get enough support, government sources said Sunday. Japan also believes the US is unlikely to drop its reluctance to expanding the Security Council, although Tokyo was expecting to obtain Washington's support.

(return to top)

27. US, Japan, Australia on PRC

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIA, US, JAPAN PRAISE CHINA, SEEK TO ENHANCE ASIAN COOPERATION", 2006-03-19) reported that the US, Australia and Japan concluded historic security talks with praise for the PRC's engagement in the Asia-Pacific and an agreement to seek greater cooperation within Asia. "We welcomed China's constructive engagement in the region and concurred on the value of enhanced cooperation with other parties such as ASEAN and the Republic of Korea."

(return to top)

28. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWANESE PROTEST CHINESE THREATS ", 2006-03-20) reported that tens of thousands of government supporters marched to protest PRC's threats against Taiwan and defend President Chen Shui-bian's tough policy on the PRC. The protest came less than a week after the opposition Nationalists mobilized an estimated 40,000 demonstrators, accusing Chen of stoking tensions between the Taiwan and the PRC.

(return to top)

29. US on Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US DE FACTO ENVOY PLEDGES TO STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH TAIWAN ", 2006-03-18) reported that the new US de facto envoy to Taiwan pledged to work with the island to help it manage its tense relations with rival PRC and deal with the security implications. "There are real challenges out there, including, in particular, careful management of cross-strait relations with a rapidly growing and increasingly self-confident China," Stephen M. Young said.

(return to top)

30. US-PRC Energy Cooperation

Financial Times ("CHINA 'READY' FOR ENERGY CO-OPERATION WITH US", 2006-03-17) reported

that the PRC's government has said it is willing to work with the US on future oil, gas and renewable energy projects, as well as on global energy security issues. "In the field of energy, China and the US are not competitors," Qin Gang, foreign ministry spokesperson, said during a press briefing. "China stands ready to co-operate with the US and other countries ... on the basis of equality and mutual benefit."

(return to top)

II. CanKor

31. Report #241

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-03-17) Senior officials from the UN World Food Programme unveil a new two-year US$100 million aid package in Pyongyang. Although labeled as development assistance, insiders admit that the contents are little changed from previous food aid. Negotiations continue on monitoring parameters. After examination by the US State Department, Pentagon and other government agencies involved in national security, the USA rejects all DPRK proposals aimed at resolving their dispute over illicit financial activities. This includes the establishment of a joint US-DPRK consultative body to discuss technical cooperation against counterfeiting, a proposal purportedly supported by China as a face-saving way to bring the DPRK back to Six Party Talks.

(return to top) CanKor ("FOCUS", 2006-03-17) ROK lawmakers demand answers as to why the number of DPR Koreans seeking asylum in the ROK has declined. This week's FOCUS section, "Refugee-defectors seek asylum elsewhere" shows that dissatisfied refugee-defectors are increasingly trying to settle in countries other than Korea, such as Europe and the USA, where asylum eligibility is extremely difficult to establish. (return to top) CanKor ("FEEDBACK", 2006-0--17) Last week's FOCUS section, "DPRK drug trafficking under review" (CanKor Report # 240), featured a story on the fate of crew members of the DPRK freighter "Pongsu." An Australian Supreme Court jury acquitted them of drug trafficking charges after three years in detention. Responding to our publication of this story, the DPRK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York sent CanKor the press release found in the FEEDBACK section of this issue. Among other things, it calls on the USA to make a formal apology and offer compensation for its alleged involvement in the case. (return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-m-nday-march-20-2006/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org